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How Does Sports Retirement Affect Elite Athletes' Well-Being?

A Synthesis of the Research Literature

A Synthesis Project

Presented to the

Department of Kinesiology, Sport Studies, and Physical Education

The College at Brockport

State University of New York

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Education

(Athletic Administration)

by

Dominic Trento

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DOES RETIREMENT AFFECT ELITE ATHLETE WELL-BEING

THE COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
BROCKPORT, NEW YORK

Department of Kinesiology, Sport Studies, and Physical Education

Title of Synthesis Project:

How Does Sports Retirement Affect Elite Athletes' Well-Being? A Synthesis of the
Research Literature.

Read and Approved by: Dr. Christine J. Hopple

Date: 12/21/20

Accepted by the Department of Kinesiology, Sport Studies, and Physical Education, The College at Brockport, State University of New York, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science in Education (Athletic Administration).

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Abstract

Athletic retirement for an elite athlete can be one of the most significant if not scary moments of their life. The end of their athletic career begs major life decisions on where to go next and what will they do – who will they be if not an athlete? Therefore, the purpose of this synthesis project was to examine how athletic retirement affects elite athletes' well-being. Data was collected using the EBSCOHOST search engine, found on SUNY- Brockport's Drake Memorial Library online research website. A total of 10 critical mass articles were analyzed. From the critical mass the researcher identified factors which positively affected elite athletes and negative factors which led to difficulty in the retirement transition for elite athletes. A synthesis data coding table was created with the data from each article. The following three research questions were answered: (1) What positive factors made the retirement transition easier for the athlete?, (2) What negative factors made the retirement transition more difficult for the athlete? (3), and What impact did the termination have on the athletes' overall quality of life? Results indicated that factors such as strong athletic identity and lack of planning/preparation for life after sport will result in a negative retirement transition and will affect the athletes' overall quality of life in retirement. In contrast, factors such as autonomous retirement motivation, preparation/planning for life after sport, and strong social or organizational support during athletic retirement transitions for elite athletes will lead to a more positive experience and more perceived subjective well-being after retirement. These findings can assist athletic administrators in attempting to ensure positive retirement transitions and overall wellness for their former and current athletes.

Keywords: Athletic Identity, Disengagement, Elite Athlete, Autonomy

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The year is 2020, and the sporting world is caught in a standstill. No goal songs, no laying down the chalk lines to first base, no “March Madness,” no “Frozen Four,” no Olympics, no handshake lines, no “get your popcorn, get your peanuts!;” just silence on the pitch, the ice, the field, and the court. The world as we know it has been flipped upside down due to a global pandemic by the name of Covid-19, and with the virus, thousands of athletes’ sports-retirement came sooner than they expected in 2020 because of global shutdowns and an ensuing lack of funding.

The pandemic aside, the eight most common reasons for athletic retirement include injury, deselection, family, burnout, finances, sports relationships, education, and age (Babic, Bjelic, & Bosnar, 2019). Research shows that each of these unique reasons for retirement have a direct impact on an elite athletes’ overall well-being, both in terms of transitioning out of the sport and in their quality of life during retirement (Babic et al., 2019).

Studies show that many elite athletes grapple in retirement with who they are, and struggle to find their identity if no longer an athlete (Lavalley & Todd, 2012). Menke and Germany Reported athletes’ feelings of “loss for life as it once was” and shattered dreams (2019). Many times, these feelings lead to athletes struggling with mental health issues after retirement. For example, Jewett, Kerr and Tamminen’s (2019) athlete/participant had such a hard time with her athletic retirement transition that she was diagnosed with a mental disorder – namely depression and anxiety in her life without competition. More notably, U.S. Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps - who collected 28 Olympic medals in his career -- struggled with depression after stepping away from the pool for good (Scutti, 2018). Phelps reported feeling so low he contemplated taking his own life in 2012 by starving himself in a hotel room (Scutti,

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2018). These examples should not be surprising, given that levels of depression and suicide in the general population of the U.S. have risen 30% since 1999; and that suicide is the second highest cause of death for those between the ages of 10 to 34 and the fourth leading cause of death for those aged of 35 to 54 (CDC, 2020). Because the average age of a retiring Div. I college athlete is 22 years (NCAA, 2020), the average age of retiring NBA player is from 27 to 30 years (Thomas, 2020), and the average age a Premier League soccer player retires is 35 years (PFA Charity, 2020) it is no wonder that athletes struggle with depression and anxiety upon athletic retirement. When many athletes retire, they are at a critical age where positive or negative factors in their transition can greatly affect their overall well-being.

Although many athletes struggle, we do see some of our favorite sports icons such as Charles Barkley, Shaquille O’Neil, and Tony Romo make their transition out of sport look like an easy venture. All three of them are making calls on live television broadcasts for professional football and basketball games while seemingly looking happy doing it. So why do some athletes have an easier time when moving into retirement than others?

Research shows that there are different factors in an elite athletes life that can make their transition into life outside of competition easier or more difficult (Menke et al., 2019). Findings imply, for example, that athletes who retired from elite-level sport due to deselection or “not being good enough” had a harder time transitioning out of sports and scored lower on the overall quality of life scale than their autonomous retirement counterparts (Babic et al., 2019). Too, the closer an athlete has gotten to the highest level of competition, the more important one’s athletic identity and role becomes to that person (Yao, Laurencelle, & Trudeau, 2020). So what does this mean for each athlete? How does the athletic experience affect the athlete in their post-sport lives? How deep does the void in their life go – if at all? And, how can sports organizations and

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athletic administrators ensure a positive well-being for their athletes upon sports retirement?

These questions form the basis of this synthesis project.

Purpose

The purpose of this synthesis project is to determine the impact which sports retirement has on the elite athlete's well-being.

Research Questions

1. What positive factors made the transition into retirement easier for the athlete?
2. What negative factors made the transition into retirement more difficult for the athlete?
3. What impact did the termination have on the athlete's overall quality of life?

Operational Definitions

1. Athletic Identity: The extent to which an individual's personal identity includes being an athlete (Barcza-Renner, Shipherd, & Basevitch, 2020)
2. Well-being: The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy (Oxford Languages, 2020)
3. Quality of Life: The standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by and individual or group (Oxford Languages, 2020)
4. Elite Athlete: For this synthesis project elite athletes are those who competed at the professional level, NCAA Div. I, or highest level of International competition (I.E. World Championships, Olympics)

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5. Disengagement: Withdrawal of behavior effort and psychological commitment from former athletic goals (Holding, Fortin, Carpentier, Hope, & Koestner, 2018)
6. Autonomous Motivation: Self-control of own behaviors or goals, independent from outside factors (Hagger, Hardcastle, Mallet, Pal & Chatzisarantis, 2014)
7. Controlled Motivation: Engaging in behaviors for externally referenced reasons such as to gain rewards or perceived approval from others (Hagger et al., 2014)

Assumptions

It is assumed that all the participants involved in these studies have been honest and truthful when citing their experiences, beliefs, emotions, and thoughts during interviews and questionnaires. It is also assumed that all instruments and software used in these studies are valid and reliable.

Delimitations

1. All of the articles analyzed are on the topic of sports retirement and its effect on elite athletes.
2. All articles reviewed have been written within the last ten years (2010-2020).
3. All articles were peer reviewed and published in an academic journal.
4. All of the articles analyzed document indicators of positive and negative sports retirement transitions.

Limitations

1. Only one article analyzed elite athletes who have been retired for more than ten years.
2. The sample sizes of elite athletes in these articles is small compared to the general population.
3. Some studies were limited to specifically retired Basketball, Football, and Baseball players.
4. Some studies were limited to only one gender.

CHAPTER 2

Methods

The purpose of chapter two is to present the methods used to analyze research which aims to find the effects which sports retirement has on elite athletes' well-being. The following methods were used to gather research articles, collect data, and display how coding/data analysis was done during this synthesis.

Data Collection

In order to be included in the critical mass for this synthesis, an article must have been published within the last ten years (2010-2020). Another guideline for an article to be included in the critical mass was that it must be peer-reviewed and based on one of the synthesis research questions: (a) what led to retirement, (b) positive factors that made transition easier, (c) negative factors that made transition harder, and (d) the impact retirement had on the athletes' overall quality of life.

For this synthesis, the researcher utilized the "Academic Search Complete tool" inside of the EBSCO Host database as well as the SPORTDiscuss tool to find peer-reviewed research articles from the last 10 years (2010-2020). The first search in the SPORTSDiscuss tool using the terms "Sports Retirement" and "Well-being" returned 69 results. The search was then narrowed down to peer-reviewed articles within the last decade, which yielded 48 results. From these results, four articles were reviewed and added to the critical mass. Using the same two databases the term "Elite Athletes" and "Transition" were added to the earlier search. Using the same methods, 58 articles were found; five were downloaded and saved to the critical mass. Lastly, a third narrowing search using the term "positive transition" was added to the previous search and

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used in lieu of “transition,” which yielded 20 results. From the 20 results one article was downloaded and added to the critical mass.

A total of 10 articles met every requirement set forth to form the critical mass for this synthesis paper. Articles for this synthesis were collected from the following peer-reviewed academic journals: *Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology*, *Journal of Athlete Development and Experience*, *Journal of Sport and Health Science*, *Physical Culture and Sport*, *Studies and Research*, *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, *Sport Mont*, *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sport*, *Exercise and Health*, *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, and *The Journal of Sports Management*.

Data Coding

Following the initial discovery of the critical mass articles, a two-step system was used to garner data from the readings and make it easily accessible. The first step in the coding process was getting all articles in the critical mass approved; once approved, articles were placed into a MS Word document grid where they were summarized into short descriptions for their methods used, purpose, analysis, discussions, and results. (See Appendix A). The purpose of the article grid was to organize the critical mass into digestible summaries for further synthesis.

Data Analysis

Ten articles were used in the critical mass of this synthesis. Of those 10, three were quantitative in nature, six were qualitative, and one utilized a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative studies collected their data using focus groups and one-on-one interviews, while the quantitative studies used surveys and questionnaires as methods to collect data. The mixed methods studies used the combination of a survey and interviews; data was analyzed in those

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studies using DNA Analysis and discursive analysis. A collection of the quantitative studies used ANCOVA, ANOVA, MPlus Software, and SPSS.

In terms of data analysis, one study used 158 Canadian government supported male and female athletes with an average age of 30 years old, in order to find relationship between motivation for retirement and sports disengagement. A second study used three cohorts, one of 33 former elite athletes, one of 122 actual-athletes, and one of 74 non-athletes, to find discrepancies between the three cohorts regarding their physical activity, nutritional habits, and their athletic identity in post-sports careers. One study used 53 retired Division I athletes who were interviewed on their lived experiences during their transition out of elite athletics. Another study used 121 media articles which covered two former elite athletes' life after retirement, in order to find recurring themes using a discursive analysis methods. Another study used 15 retired former Div. I college basketball and football players, each former athlete was put through 15 one-on-one interviews to help understand the transition difficulties out of elite level athletics. One study had a subject pool of one former Canadian University/international competitor, this study documented the lived experience and mental health of a single female athlete during her transition phases.

Three studies took place outside of North America. One study consisted of 170 Croatian elite-athletes, 74 male and 96 females. In this study three scales were used to measure life well-being and reasons for sports retirement. Another international study followed one former Australian Rules football player in a narrative case study. A final international study had a population of 45 retired elite-athletes from three professional soccer leagues; one-on-one interviews were conducted to understand the athletes transition out of sports and overall quality of life.

Chapter 3

Review of Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature that was used to create the critical mass of this synthesis. There were a total of 10 articles that fit the standards to be considered for the critical mass. Of the ten articles three analyzed Canadian Athletes, three analyzed NCAA Div. I Athletes, and four analyzed international athletes.

Canadian Athletic Retirement

Holding, et al.'s (2018) study aimed to understand the ways elite athletes adapt to their post-sport career as a form of disengagement from their former athletic self and profession. A secondary purpose was to understand the circumstances that manifested the athlete's retirement. This study recruited 158 government supported Canadian Athletes, both male and female with an average age of 30 years old. The recruited athletes were analyzed over four timepoints in their lives, at each time point they were asked to report on their subjective well-being (SWB) through a 7-point Likert scale; (Timepoint 1) the peak of an athletes career, (Timepoint 2) two months after retirement, (Timepoint 3) two years after retirement, and (Timepoint 4) three and a half years post-retirement (Holding et al., 2018). At timepoint one athletes were asked to report on their motivation for sports engagement, at timepoint two athletes were asked their specific reasons for retirement and their motivation to retire, and during timepoints three and four athletes discussed their disengagement from their sport and reengagement with new activities (Holding, et al., 2018).

Holding et al. (2018) found that athletes who felt they had an autonomous motivation or “self-motivation” for retiring had more SWB than athletes who felt their retirement was controlled or forced. Similarly, athletes who felt they competed for autonomous reasons had an

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easier retirement process than those who felt their motivation for competing was controlled by someone or something else.

Athletes' SWB showed variation dependent on the stage they were in retirement, as SWB decreased in the months shortly after their sports termination but recovered to "normal" levels two to three and a half years after retirement (Holding et al., 2018). The research showed that over the four timepoints, athletes began to disengage from their athletic career/self. The further athletes moved away from their career retirement, the more they disengaged. Their findings also suggest that disengagement from an athletes' former career and athletic identity positively affected their SWB over time.

Additionally, a study by Yao et al. (2020) sought to identify inconsistencies between actual and former athletes regarding athletic identity, physical activity, and nutritional habits. Data was collected from 426 participants, including 224 women and 202 men from Canadian universities in Quebec. Participants were separated into three groups: Former Athletes (FA), Actual Athletes (AA), and Non-Athletes (NA). The FA's and AA's were required to have competed at a high level of sport for at least five years; 10.7% competed at the provincial level, 50.1% competed at the national level, 29.1% competed at the international level, and 10.1% competed at the professional level (Yao, et al., 2020). Each participant completed a questionnaire on Athletic Identity (AIQ), duration and intensity of their occupational and leisure time physical activity (PA), and their nutritional habits (Yao, et al., 2020). A one-way analysis of covariance was used to compare the three groups of participants using ANCOVAS.

Completion of this analysis revealed that FA's nutritional habits declined as a result of sports retirement, falling below their NA counterparts. In addition the amount of PA during leisure time decreased in FA. Yao et al.'s (2020) research also supports that athletic identity can

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be affected by past level of competition. FA's who competed at the highest level of their sport were more likely to have a stronger athletic identity than that of their provincial level counterparts. Findings show that professional FA's have a stronger athletic identity and are more likely to have a positive level of PA because their identity drives their behaviors.

Similarly, strong athletic identities can lead to mental health disorders following retirement. A study by Jewett, Kerr, and Tammie (2019) aimed to explore "sports context" in an athlete's experience with mental health challenges during their retirement transition. Researchers interviewed Bryn, a Canadian University athlete who competed for her country at the international level. Bryn was selected by the researchers because she suffered from anxiety and depression upon retiring from her sports career. The researchers conducted four 60-105-minute interviews with Bryn to understand her life story and lived experiences.

Through a dialogical narrative analysis Jewett et al. (2019) found that during Bryn's time as an athlete she developed the dimension of "Glorified Self" because of her celebrity status gained from being a star athlete. Bryn found structure and support from her coaches, teammates, and school; so much so that she was more confident in herself and her abilities than she had ever been in her life. Following Bryn's retirement, however, Jewett et al. (2019) discovered that Bryn began to fit the wreckage narrative, where her self-image no longer fit the storyline she created for herself. One year after Bryn's retirement she was diagnosed with an adjustment disorder due to her lack of self-worth and feeling of "what do I do now." Bryn was depressed and anxious about her future and felt lonely from the lack of community she once had with her sport (Jewett, et al., 2019). Similarly, the professional help Bryn once had at her fingertips like a sports psychologist was no longer available to her upon retirement, which added to her lack of support, leaving her vulnerable for a mental disorder (Jewett, et al., 2019).

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Jewett et al. (2019) supports the idea that elite athletes who take on strong athletic identities have a harder time adjusting to life after sport because their next life venture lacks tangible goals and structure like they once had, and their new life feels much less rewarding. Athletes who are in the limelight can find it hard to go back to being an “average joe” and the lack of professional support following retirement can lead to mental health disorders (Jewett, et al., 2019).

NCAA Div. I Athletic Retirement

A study by Barcza-Renner, Shipherd, and Basevitch (2020) sought to understand the variables that influence NCAA Div. I athletes psychological health and well-being as they transition into retirement. Through a survey of 12 open-ended questions, Barzca-Renner et al. (2020) requested responses from 15 former college athletes on, (A) their transition out of sport, (B) their support from others during their transition, (C) their stress level following retirement, and (D) their current focus and interests. Barzca-Renner et al. (2020) found that from these responses four themes emerged regarding a positive or negative transition out of their athletic careers; (1) completion of sports goals, (2) cause of the athletes retirement, (3) preparedness for retirement, and (4) the athletes satisfaction with social support.

Barcza-Renner et al. (2020) findings highlighted that NCAA Div. I athletes vary in their retirement experience, both positively and negatively. It's supported in this study that retiring athletes who have a tangible support system varying from friends, coaches, family, or a romantic relationship will increase the probability of the athlete having a positive transition out of their sports career (Barcza-Renner et al., 2020). However, Barzca-Renner et al. (2020) research also shows that college athletes who had a lack of a support-system felt un-prepared for their transition. Furthermore, Barcza-Renner et al. (2020) supports that athletes who felt they

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accomplished their sports goal during athletic participation had a more successful retirement process.

In a similar study by Warehime, Dinkel, Bjorsen-Ramig, and Blount (2017), where they explored factors that led to high levels of wellness in 12 former NCAA Div. I student-athletes using the indivisible self-model. Researchers used 30-70-minute interviews and a short questionnaire to understand the lived experiences of the participants. The indivisible self-model is separated into five categories to determine if a participants overall self-image is positive; (1) Creative self, (2) Coping self, (3) Essential Self, (4) Social self, and lastly (5) Physical self (Warehime et al., 2017).

Through these 12 individuals Warehime et al. (2017) discovered that in order to have a positive transition into a post-sport career it is important for the athlete to feel that they are in control in their lives. Most commonly mentioned in this category was enjoyment for their new work and finding their new job meaningful. Regarding, coping self (2), Warehime et al.'s (2017) athletes/participants felt they had more time for themselves and leisure activities since retirement, granting them more time to focus on themselves and a feeling of reduced stress. In terms of essential self (3) Warehime et al. (2017) found that the retired college athletes felt they had more time for self-care and that their main source of well-being came from staying active. Regarding Social self (4), the retired athletes felt they had great friendships in their lives and healthy romantic partners; and, their physical self (5) was no different, with the majority of the participants still exercise four to five days a week (Warehime et al., 2017). Through this research Warehime et al. (2017) supports that NCAA Div. I athletes who showed a positive transition out of sport were prepared for life after competition by taking an internship during college, have

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strong self-worth, have an overall positive outlook on life, and had healthy relationships and support systems in their lives.

In relation to Warehime et al. (2017) study, Menke et al. (2019) aimed to provide data that would add to the understanding of the transition that happens during an athlete's retirement. Using former NCAA Div. I men's basketball and football players who won championships, Menke et al. (2019) performed 15 one-one-one interviews to understand the difficulties former NCAA athletes had in their transition out of sports. The findings were grouped into three major themes; (1) Coping with transition, (2) gains or strengths, and (3) the loss of identity.

Menke et al. (2019) findings support that retired NCAA Div. I athletes struggled to understand who they were after retirement. Many of the athletes reported the feeling of loss of self, struggle to find structure in their lives, and an overwhelming feeling of depression and anxiety (Menke et al., 2019).

International Athletic Retirement

The first study in this category explored the difficulties in sports retirement and transition into post-sport life through the analysis of cultural artifacts. Cosh, Crabb, and Tully (2015) analyzed 121 Australian newsprint media articles, all of which reported on the post-retirement actions of two gold-medal swimmers.

Researchers used discursive analysis in order to find recurring themes and patterns in the stories about the swimmers. From there, Cosh et al. (2015) analyzed the articles for transition difficulties, the identities the athletes were ascribed, and what led to transition difficulties. Their results showed that in the context of print media, the retired swimmers were only referred to in a unidimensional way - as athletes. Though the swimmers had been retired five and seven years respectively, the identities of the two swimmers were always constructed from their athletic

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background and never by their current roles - father, husband, or son - thereby creating negative implications on the swimmer's psychological well-being (Cosh et al., 2015).

Cosh et al. (2015) also found that there were limited identities available for the two swimmers; when either of them made a mistake, the media labeled them as a "fallen champion" or "disgraced athlete" which led to alcohol abuse and depression in the swimmers. Cosh et al.'s (2015) study determined that athletes with a strong sense of athletic identity struggle more in retirement and are enabled by media and social constructs to adjust to their new roles.

In contrast to discursive analysis, a second international study used quantitative methods to establish relationships between an athlete's life well-being and the reasons for ending their sports career. Babic et al. (2019) gathered 170 Croatian Olympic athletes (74 male and 96 female), who were asked to take a 15-question survey to determine their well-being in relation to their termination from sport. Three scales were used to measure the athletes' well-being: quality of life scale, scale of life well-being, and the extended satisfaction with life scale. Babic et al. (2019) gave the athletes eight of the most common reasons for retirement in the survey and all of the questions were answered in a yes or no format.

Babic et al.'s (2019) research determined the highest correlations for having a negative overall well-being were associated with athletes who retired from their sport because of a bad relationship with an individual from the sport (coach, trainer, teammate), an injury, or being cut (not being good enough). Results reveal that athletes who felt they retired from sport because of autonomous motivations (independent choice) had more overall well-being than the athletes who felt they were forced into retirement.

In relation to forced retirement, a study by Demetriou, Jago, Gill, Mesagno, and Lutfiye (2020) followed one Australian rules football player in a narrative case study to understand his

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forced retirement transition. The purpose of this study was to generate knowledge on how to improve the retirement process of elite-athletes.

Using three data collection points, Demetriou et al. (2020) conducted 90-minute interviews with one middle-aged former pro-football player. The interviews took place five years following his retirement, each interview one month following the last. Prior to the first interview the footballer was asked to complete a life satisfaction scale survey to get a base of how he felt of his overall satisfaction. Demetriou et al. (2020) found that the subject had a poor overall satisfaction with life from the survey.

Similarly, Demetriou et al. (2020) found through interviews that the subjects forced retirement was a main reason for his negative transition out of sport. The footballer felt resentment towards his old organization, as well as a feeling of being thrown away, and a loss of community. This poor feeling led to alcohol abuse and neglect of his family.

Demetriou et al. (2020) findings show that organizations handle athletes as a commodity, while the players are attached to their former organizations, the lack of preparation and loss of community can be detrimental to an athletes' well-ness in retirement.

Alternatively, a study aimed to ensure positive transition into athletic retirement was done by Knights, Sherry, and Ruddock-Hudson (2019). The purpose on this international study was to explore the transition experiences and life after sport of 45 retired professional football players. The athletes were selected from three professional leagues; Australian Football League, The National Rugby League, and the A-League.

Knights et al. (2019) conducted 30-90 minute interviews with each retired footballer. Each interview was broken into three points of discussion: (1) transition, (2) retirement, (3) and

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experiences flourishing in retirement. Thematic coding was used to group pattern and themes in the footballers responses.

Knights et al. (2019) found four themes that helped guarantee a positive transition into athletic retirement; (1) Support offered by the organization or club, (2) Athletes planning for retirement, (3) preparation for retirement, and (4) positive influences in transition. From there, two themes were made; preparing for transition and a having a supportive environment as most athletes noted that even if their club had let them down, there support system was able to keep them satisfied in their overall well-being.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this chapter is to report the results of this synthesis based on the original research questions. A total of ten studies met the standards for the critical mass and were used to create the results for this synthesis. The following research questions were proposed for this synthesis:

Research Questions:

1. What positive factors made the transition into retirement easier for the athlete?
2. What negative factors made the transition into retirement more difficult for the athlete?
3. What impact did the termination have on the athlete's overall quality of life?

What positive factors made the transition into retirement easier for the athlete?

For this section the researcher has identified support systems, preparation and planning for retirement, the accomplishment of an athlete's goals, and autonomous motivation as positive factors in an athlete's retirement transition.

Support Systems

The data suggest that athletes who identified having at least one person or organization supporting them in their transition had an overall positive experience retiring from sport (Barzca-Renner et al., 2020). Support systems can be categorized into two divisions: organizational support and social support. Whether the athlete identified with having a family member, a friend, a coach, or a romantic partner in their transition process, having any support at all made the transition easier and more positive for the athlete (Barzca-Renner et al., 2020). One athlete/participant from Barzca-Renner et al.'s (2020)

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study noted “My coach put me in contact with someone about an internship in Human Resources and I participated in a professional development program at school the summer after I graduated” (p.7), while another stated “I had support from my family, coaches, and trainer. They all ensured that I did not disappoint anyone and that they would take care of my medical needs” (p.8). Knights et al. (2019) determined that athletes who have high levels of social support (friends, family, or romantic partner) were able to deal with stress more effectively. One of their participants noted “especially when going through struggles—just seeing them (family), without having to say something, is support” (p.13).

Support groups in the transition stage can be imperative towards improving the athletes’ well-being and satisfaction in their new role. Social support is very important, but organizational support can be equally important. Data suggests that athletes who found support from their club or organization during the retirement process had a positive experience in transition because they had more appreciation and respect for their organizations and did not report any resentment towards their former team (Knights et al., 2019).

Preparation/Planning

Preparation and planning work in harmony when relative to a positive retirement transition for elite-athletes. While preparation is the mental aspect of being ready to walk away, planning is being organized and ready for the next from chapter in life (Knights et al., 2019).

Findings suggest elite athletes who took steps in preparation for the inevitable retirement from their career had positive experiences in their transition into post-sport life (Barzca-Renner et al., 2020). Former NCAA Div. I athletes who had emotionally prepared

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for life after sport found positivity in their post-sport transition. An athlete/participant from Barzca-Renner et al., (2020) noted “I was ready to transition because I never considered running track professionally. Obviously leaving athletics is difficult but I was prepared for it” (p.7).

Having a plan in place can drastically improve an athlete’s transition period. As a Barzca-Renner et al. (2020) athlete/participant stated “I knew I wanted to get a job and start working to try and make some money and get involved in something else to keep my mind off the fact that I can’t play anymore” (p.7).

The results indicate that retiring from sport for education, employment or age will lead to a positive experience in the athlete’s transition (Babic et al., 2019). This outcome stems from the mental preparation and planning it takes to start a new line of work (employment/education), and the emotional preparedness most athletes understand; you cannot compete forever (age) (Babic et al., 2019). Babic et al. (2019) also found that age is a positive indicator for successful retirement because athletes know they can’t compete forever, therefore they are mentally prepared to retire. Leaving sport for employment or education is also a positive indicator for a successful retirement transition because of the planning and preparation it takes prior to leaving the playing field, and the disengagement from their former athletic self into a new role. A retired NCAA Div. I athlete/participant from Barzca-Renner et al. (2020) states “I have transitioned well without my sport to lean on and it has allowed me to invest in the pursuit of my career, professional and friendly relationships, and other interests” (p. 7) while another noted that she had a positive transition because she attended law school following her retirement (Barzca-Renner et al., 2020).

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Having a plan and being prepared for life after sports allows the athlete to feel a sense of autonomy around their retirement, the athlete earns a sense of pride knowing that they have left the playing field under their “own terms” (Knights et al., 2019, p.9).

Accomplished Goals

Findings suggest that should an athlete accomplish their performance, learning, or enjoyment goals during their tenure as an elite athlete they will have an easier and more positive transition into life after sport (Barzca-Renner et al., 2020).

Goal setting is a characteristic that all elite athletes share in common, although, the goals can change from athlete to athlete. An elite-athlete reaching their performance goal can influence their retirement transition in a positive way. One retired athlete/participant from Barzca-Renner et al. (2020) who had a positive transition noted “I fell short of succeeding as well as I wanted to in college golf, but my ultimate goal was to play Division I and I did accomplish that” (p.6). As conveyed in the previous quote, it isn’t all about performance. Enjoyment and learning goals are big factors in an athletes feeling of accomplishment. Elite athletes who felt that they met their learning goals (i.e. improved at their sport) or met their enjoyment goals (i.e. had fun while being part of the team) also have an easier time in their retirement transition (Barzca-Renner et al., 2020).

Autonomous Motivation

The data suggests one of the biggest factors for a positive retirement transition experience is the autonomous motivation to leave the playing field (Holding et al., 2018). There is an undeniable correlation between an elite-athletes’ high levels of subjective well-being (SWB) and their autonomous retirement from their playing careers (Holding et al., 2018). Athletes who feel that their retirement is their choice and not forced upon them by

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outside factors have an easier time in disengaging from their former athletic self, granting them more SWB in retirement (Holding et al., 2018).

Similarly, data suggests that athletes who had autonomous motivation for participating in their sport also had higher levels of SWB than those who felt controlled or forced motivation to compete (Holding et al., 2018). The findings suggest that elite-athletes who feel they are in control of their own future have much higher SWB in retirement than those who feel a lack of control (Holding et al., 2018).

What negative factors made the transition into retirement more difficult for the athlete?

In this section the researcher identified strong athletic identity, lack of preparation and planning, lack of social and organizational support, and controlled motivation as negative factors in an athlete's retirement transition.

Strong Athletic Identity

Results indicate that a strong athletic identity is the most common factor in an elite athletes' negative experience in their transition out of sport. A strong athletic identity leads to a prolonged and sometimes failed disengagement process, which data shows leads to poor overall SWB (Holding, et al., 2018). Elite-athletes tend to have strong athletic identities due to the amount of time spent on their craft and their lack of focus in other aspects of their life. It is known that strong athletic identity during the retirement transition can lead to mental health issues (Jewett et al., 2019), depression (Menke, et al., 2019), and alcohol abuse (Cosh et al., 2015).

Athletic Identities are not only formed in the athlete's own psyche but from social constructs as well (Cosh et al., 2015). From a young age elite athlete's are identified by

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friends, parents, and news media by their athletic self, which can psychologically affect the athlete in negative way (Cosh et al., 2015). As friends, family members, and media outlets continue to push the identity upon the individual it creates a “glorified self” narrative that will eventually no longer hold true which turns into a “wreckage” narrative; where self-image no longer fits the storyline created for themselves (Jewett et al., 2019). This social construct of athletic identity can lead to a negative experience in the athlete’s retirement because the athlete no longer understands who they are if not an athlete. One participant/athlete from Jewett et al. (2019) noted “Every day I thought, what the fuck am I doing?... when people ask me what I do, and I had to say I coach and work in retail it didn’t feel as good as saying I go to a great school and I’m an elite-athlete” (p.425).

Strong athletic identities also make it hard for the retired athlete to find meaning in their post-sport career due to their perceived lack of value in the real world. The self-image the athlete had for themselves no longer fits the narrative they currently hold, thereby creating stress and anxiety in the transition (Jewett et al., 2019). A participant/athlete from Demetriou et al. (2018) who identified as having a strong athletic identity stated “In the years after I have ended my career, I have had no satisfaction. I have achieved nothing in these years.” (p. 330). This same participant noted abusing alcohol as well as neglecting his family in his retirement transition.

Similarly, strong athletic identities force athletes into a unidimensional psyche in which their sporting involvement can be used to fix or neglect other aspects of their life. A participant from Jewett et al. (2019) stated “I felt better when I would go training when I was emotional and then have a good session. Even if it was just one interval, it made me feel like in my relationship I could think ‘whatever, his loss, look how awesome I am’ when

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I would have a good training session it was just like footsteps, one step away from that bad thing and then it would just get better and better and further removed” (p.422). This mindset can be psychologically detrimental to the athlete as they don’t have a coping-self outside of sport. This lack of coping-self due to strong athletic identity can lead to depression and mental health disorders in the athlete following retirement (Jewett et al., 2019).

Lack of Support

Research shows that elite-athletes who have no social or organizational support in their retirement have a negative transition experience and resentment towards their former club (Demetriou et al., 2020).

Retiring athletes who suffer from lack of guidance in their retirement struggle to adjust into a new role. Athletes who retired from their club or organization who reported a lack of support also reported either a poor or a failed transition experience (Barzca-Renner et al., 2020). A common adage of retired elite-athletes is referring to elite-level athletic organizations as the “machine” (Warehime et al., 2017). Regardless of one’s performance, the machine keeps spinning even after you’re gone, and the organizations do little to support their former investments. Demetriou et al.’s (2020) athlete/participant reported a feeling of being “cut at the knees” by his former club; he gave his team 16 years of his life and in return received a lack of support and respect and a feeling of resentment towards his former club because they did nothing to prepare him for life after sport or think about his overall well-being (p. 329). An athlete/participant from Knights et al. (2019) reported having a negative retirement transition experience because of a lack of club support in his retirement transition; he stated “I finished at my club after being with them for eight years.

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I got delisted Monday. About 20 minutes later my bags were packed... I got told to clean my locker out, and I've never been back since. I haven't had a phone call from anyone in the administration" (p. 11). This act of neglect from a club leaves the elite-athlete feeling lost and used by their organization, which creates resentment on their part for their sport or club.

A lack of social support can result in negative feelings during transitioning out of sport. Athletes who reported a lack of social support reported a feeling of loneliness during their negative retirement transition experience (Menke et al., 2019). Athletes who reported lack of social support have a tendency to think that the emotions they are feeling in their retirement transition aren't normal (Menke et al., 2019). One athlete/participant stated "This whole thing though, this last part (difficulty with sports retirement) has been an eye opener for me. Not everybody I knew went thought it, but I wasn't around, I didn't know anyone else who went through it... I had to change my life and that's depressing. I'm glad to know that I'm not some kind of weird freak that can't get his act together" (p. 23).

Unprepared/Unplanned

Stemming from strong athletic identity, research shows that elite-athletes who either did not plan for their athletic retirement or were unprepared for their retirement, or both, determined they had a negative transition experience into their post-sport life (Knights et al., 2019).

Being unprepared for the retirement from athletics can stem from a multitude of factors. For this synthesis the researcher has identified these three reasons as the most common for the lack of preparation: (1) Injury, (2) Deselection (not being good enough), (3) Strong athletic Identity (believing you can play forever) (Knights et al., 2019). All three

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of these circumstances have been reported to cause the most stress. They can also negatively affect the elite athletes disengagement process (Holding et al., 2018). And lastly they account for the lowest scores of perceived scale of life quality (SLQ) (Babic et al., 2019).

As noted in earlier sections, planning for retirement is related to the organizational elements of preparing for life after sport. Elite-athletes who did not plan for their career and life after sport noted feelings of anger, frustration, disappointment and regret in their retirement transition (Knights et al., 2019). In addition, elite-athletes who didn't prepare or plan for life after sport commonly struggle finding structure in their new life (Menke et al., 2019). Knights et al. (2019) athlete/participants who didn't plan/prepare for life after sport discussed turning to drinking and gambling, running with bad groups of people, and the loss of close friends and relationships as some of the negative results of their lack of preparation.

Forced/Controlled Retirement Motivation

Elite-athletes who felt their sport-retirement was controlled by outside factors or forced upon them by their club or organization have a difficult transition and a negative experience in retirement (Holding et al., 2018).

Research shows that athletes that were forced to retire from their athletic careers took longer to disengage from their athletic identities than their autonomous retirement counterparts (Holding et al., 2018). Controlled motivation does not only stem from being deselected or for not being good enough, but also from a career ending injury or prolonged injury. Forced retirement leaves the athlete feeling unprepared and unplanned for their life after sport. This leads to a negative retirement experience like Demetriou et al., 's(2020)

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athlete/participant who suffered from knee injuries, and was eventually forced to retire by his club; he noted “I just didn’t get that opportunity (to plan/prepare) and it still sits foul with me that I wasn’t given that opportunity. I wasn’t given, granted that respect by the club that I had given so much to” (p. 328).

What impact did the termination have on the athlete’s overall quality of life?

Research shows that there are multiple implications that can lead to an elite-athletes overall quality of life being more positive or negative. Holding et al., (2018) shows a correlation between athletes who felt their athletic career ended on their own terms and a positive disengagement process and an overall positive SWB. Conversely athletes who felt they were controlled in their retirement had negative SWB and a longer disengagement process.

Research also indicates that former athletes (FA’s) who played at the highest level of their sport continue to be physically active in their retirement (Yao et al., 2020). The findings suggest that staying physically active for retired elite athletes is important to their “essential self.” Participant/athletes from Warehime et al. (2017) referred to physical activity as “self-care.”

Some elite-athletes noted that their retirement from sport was a positive factor in their next career, noting that the tools they learned from their sport and the teamwork they gained over their career led to being a leader in their new role (Menke et al., 2019).

Some elite-athletes struggled in life after sport, like Bryn the participant/athlete from Jewett et al., (2019) who developed a mental disorder because of her loss of identity. Similarly, John from Demetriou et al., (2020) picked up a drinking problem and neglected his wife and kids.

Chapter 5

Conclusion/Future Research

In this section of the synthesis the researcher will provide a conclusion of the research and ideas for future research. The conclusion consists of three main points that can be extruded from this synthesis project. The future research will provide an avenue for future studies to investigate well-being for retired elite athletes.

Conclusion

A total of ten articles were examined to investigate how sports retirement affects elite athlete's well-being. The research revealed many factors which can influence an athlete's retirement transition (in either a positive or negative manner); these in turn can affect an athlete's overall quality of life after retirement. These factors include social or organizational support in retirement transition, the athlete's preparation and planning for retirement, autonomous or controlled motivation to retire, and the athletes' strength of athletic identity. Results provided valuable information regarding how to improve the retirement transition for elite athletes in order to guarantee an easier and more positive experience in retirement.

Athletic Identity is one of the most common factors which leads to negative perceived wellness in retired athletes (Demetriou et al., 2020). A strong athletic identity was shown to have a negative effect on an athlete's retirement transition and definitively affects their disengagement process (Holding et al., 2018).

It is too early to understand the full impact COVID-19 will have on elite athlete's wellness in their retirement transition or in life after retirement. However, the researcher

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identified three main points we now know about the effect unanticipated athletic termination has on elite athletes' wellness after retirement and in transition.

First, being unprepared and not having a plan in place will lead to a negative well-being and a negative retirement transition experience (Knights et al., 2019). Not having the mental preparation for life after sport or the organizational planning for athletic retirement will leave the athlete feeling unstructured and with a lack of direction, leading to poor perceived wellness.

Second, controlled motivation for retirement will lead to a negative transition experience (Holding et al., 2018) and resentment towards an athlete's former team, club or coach/general manager (Demetriou et al., 2020). Athletes who feel forced to retire hold anger towards their club and sport. Controlled motivation to retire also results in athletes being unplanned and unprepared for life after sport. In contrast, autonomous motivation for retirement will lead to a positive transition experience due to the athletes feelings of "leaving on their own terms" (Holding et al., 2018).

Third, elite athletes must explore other avenues of life outside of sport to have a positive transition experience and positive perceived quality of life after competition. Strong athletic identities force elite athletes to focus on one aspect of their lives. Athletes who explored internships and hobbies outside of sport experience more perceived wellness.

Athletic retirement and its effect on an elite athlete's well-being are different from athlete to athlete, as there are a host of different factors that can affect the athletes' wellness. From this research, administrators, coaches, and organizations can improve the transition process for future athletes.

Future Research

In order to continue learning about how sports retirement affects elite-athletes well-being there must be a continuation of research. One suggestion for future research is to see how the implementation of organizational support in the years after an athlete has retired will affect their overall quality of life. When athletes are competing for their club or organization, they have professional support at their fingertips, when they retire or graduate all of those resources are stripped away. Clubs and organizations could use their boosters and alumni to reach out to former athlete's years after their retirement to check-in. Organizations staying in contact with their former athletes can provide insight on how to help and support athletes who struggle in retirement and how they can improve the experience for their current athletes.

The research showed that social support and organizational support in the retirement transition experience will dramatically improve an athletes' subjective well-being and quality of life.

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APPENDIX A

Author Title Source	Purpose	Methods & Procedures	Analysis	Findings	Discussion/ Recommendations Research Notes – Commonalities/Differences
<p> Holding, A., Fortin, J.A., Carpentier, J., Hope, N., Koestner, R.</p> <p>Letting Go of Gold: Examining the Role of Autonomy In Elite Athletes’ Disengagement from Their Athletic Careers and Well-Being in Retirement</p> <p> Holding, A., Fortin, J., Carpentier, J., Hope, N., & Koestner, R. (2018). Letting go of gold: examining the role of Autonomy in elite athletes’ disengagement from their Athletic careers and well-being in retirement. <i>Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 14</i>(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1123/jcsp.2018-0029</p>	<p>To seek and conceptualize healthy adaptation to an athletic career termination as a form of successful disengagement. As well as seeking to understand the factors that facilitate athletes’ retirement and maximize their post-sport well-being.</p>	<p>Recruited 158 government supported Canadian elite athletes 61.% female, 85% Male, average age of 30 Procedure: researchers contacted retired athletes via email. four time points in athletes’ lives were assessed; three time points in the first survey and one time</p>	<p>Analyses were conducted using SPSS 23. Researchers conducted preliminary correlation analyses to understand association between reason for retirement and motivation to retire. Next, used ANOVA and paired samples t-test.</p>	<p>Athletes who showed an autonomous motivation for retiring had more (SWB) than those who had a controlled motivation for retiring Athletes who felt they were autonomous about playing their sport had an easier retirement process than those who felt</p>	<p>athletes’ SWB changed throughout their retirement stage: while SWB decreased following retirement, athletes recovered in their SWB close to baseline levels approximately 2 and 3.5 years following retirement. athletes disengage from their terminated athletic career 2- 3.5-year follow-up. The quicker you can disengage from your athletic identity the quicker and better your overall well-being will increase.</p>

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		<p>point in the follow-up survey.</p> <p>The four time points represented the peak of athletes' career (T1), two months post-retirement (T2), approximately two years following retirement (T3) and approximately 3.5 years following retirement (T4).</p> <p>Participants were asked to write a small paragraph describing themselves at each time point.</p>		<p>controlled motivation to compete in their sport.</p>	
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Author Title Source	Purpose	Methods & Procedures	Analysis	Findings	Discussion/ Recommendations Research Notes – Commonalities/Differences
<p>Barcza-Renner, K., Shipherd, A.M., Basevitch, I., A qualitative examination of sports retirement in former Div. I Athletes Kelly Barcza-Renner, Amber M. Shipherd, & Itay Basevitch. (2020). A qualitative examination of sport retirement in former ncaa division I athletes. <i>Journal of Athlete Development and Experience</i>, 2(1). https://doi.org/10.25035/jade.02.01.01</p>	<p>understanding of the variables that influence college athletes' psychological health and well-being as they transition to retirement</p>	<p>53 former Div I athletes were interviewed about their lived experiences of athletic retirement through a set of open-ended questions These open-ended items focused on the former college athletes' perceived transition out of sport, support from others throughout the transition process, level</p>	<p>All investigators read through participants responses and dated was organized by meaningful units (MU) from there they created four themes and two sub themes.</p>	<p>Four themes were as stated: Sports Goals, Retirement Cause, Preparedness, Satisfaction with social support. most participants discussing their overall transition and the theme of preparedness emerged. Participants identified they planned for their transition, they had an</p>	<p>The findings suggested that former college athletes had diverse retirement experiences ranging from positive to negative. participants who reported they had a successful retirement transition said they accomplished their athletic goals. All participants who reported having at least one identified support group reported a positive transition out of sport.</p>

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		of stress since retiring from sport, and current focus and interests		unexpected transition, their lives during their transition lacked structure, and/or they had been struggling with their identity or purpose throughout their transition.	
Author Title Source	Purpose	Methods & Procedures	Analysis	Findings	Discussion/ Recommendations Research Notes – Commonalities/Differences
Yao, P.L., Laurencelle, L., Trudeau, F., Former athletes’ lifestyle and self-definition changes after retirement from sports Yao, P., Laurencelle, L., & Trudeau, F. (2020). Former athletes’ lifestyle and self-definition changes after retirement from sports. <i>Journal of Sport and Health Science</i> , 9(4), 376–383. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2018.08.006	Identify discrepancies between actual and former athletes regarding athletic identity, Physical activity (PA), and nutrition habits	Actual athletes (AA; n = 122), former athletes (FA; n = 230) , and nonathletes (NA; n = 74) were asked to complete an online questionnaire	One way analysis of covariance using ANCOVAS to compare the three groups.	Sport retirement may affect FA quality of nutritional habits tends to decline below the NA level, as well as the amount of time	FA who competed at the professional level were more likely to have a higher athletic identity score than FA at the provincial level. This finding implies that the closer the athlete has gotten to the elite level, the more important one's

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		on athletic identity, duration and intensity levels of occupational and leisure time PA, and nutritional habits.		spent practicing physical activities during leisure time. Athletic status does not ensure PA practice during sport post career.	association with the athletic role becomes . This imprint of the athletic role could be linked to a more demanding sport context in terms of physical training, practice, competition, and traveling. lack of physical activity has been linked to lower levels of health and wellness;
Author Title Source	Purpose	Methods & Procedures	Analysis	Findings	Discussion/ Recommendations Research Notes – Commonalities/Differences
Warehime, S., Dinkel, D., Bjorsen-Ramig, A., Blount., A., A Qualitative Exploration of Former College Student-Athletes’ Wellness Warehime, S., Dinkel, D., Bjornsen-Ramig, A., & Blount, A. (2017). A qualitative exploration of former college student-athletes’ wellness. <i>Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research</i> , 75(1), 23–34. https://doi.org/10.1515/pcssr-2017-0018	To explore the factors that led to higher levels of wellness in former Student-Athletes (SA)	Twelve former SAs (were interviewed at a Division 1 Midwestern public university SA’s were emailed by	Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim into Microsoft word doc. Data was analyzed using the process of immersion/crystallization. Immersion involves researchers immersing themselves	Creative Self: Most frequent positive reference were related to control, emotions, and work. Most participant felt they	participants displayed high levels in the IS-WEL’s factors of the <i>creative self, coping self, essential self, social self, and physical self.</i> This is a tiny sample size of 12 participants, but it helps to show how/why positive transition out of sport.. I.E.- internships in college, meaningful job,

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		<p>former coaches and the director of student development (DSD), Former SD's who lived in the same city as the uni were targeted. They used the snowball method to collect more participants.</p> <p>Procedures:</p> <p>The interviewers developed a interview guide based on the Indivisible Self Model, to assess wellness of SA. Interviews lasted 30-70 mins and participants</p>	<p>in the data by reading the data. While crystallization involves a period of reflecting in which immersion is suspended in an effort to identify specific patterns and themes noticed in immersion process.</p>	<p>had a good overall sense of control in their lives.</p> <p>^Work, most said they enjoyed and found it meaningful. ^ these students said they had a career in mind in college. 8 of 10 of these students mentioned having a internship in college.</p> <p>Coping Self: 3 factors=</p> <p>All SA said they feel satisfied with themselves, SA said</p>	<p>self worth, and positive attitudes.</p>
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		<p>completed a brief questionnaire via email before arriving.</p>		<p>they had more time for leisure and focus on themselves, in terms of stress they say they have less stress, or they handle it well.</p> <p>Essential Self: 2 factors=</p> <p>Self-care, most SA said staying active is a main source of their wellness and self-care.</p> <p>Spirituality, most SA were satisfied with their spiritual practices.</p>	
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				<p>Social Self: SA displayed high levels of wellness in both factors of social self, all SA said they have good friendships and healthy relationships.</p> <p>Physical Self: SA showed high levels of wellness in both factors of PS, exercise-most still 4-5 days a week,</p>	
Author Title	Purpose	Methods & Procedures	Analysis	Findings	Discussion/

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Source					Recommendations Research Notes – Commonalities/Differences
<p>Cosh, S., Crabb, S., Tully, P, J., A Champion out of the pool? A Discursive Exploration of two Australian Olympic Swimmers Transition from Elite Sport to Retirement Cosh, S., Crabb, S., & Tully, P. (2015). A champion out of the pool? A discursive exploration of two australian olympic swimmers’ transition from elite sport to retirement. <i>Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 19</i>, 33–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2015.02.006</p>	<p>To explore retirement and transition difficulties in a cultural context through the analysis of Australian newsprint media</p>	<p>An analysis of 121 media articles reporting on post-retirement experiences of two Australian Swimmers 7 and 5 years into retirement. Data was analyzed for repeated representation of transition difficulties, specifically how the cause of difficulties was attributed. The identities were ascribed to athletes and what these</p>	<p>Discursive analysis. Finding recurring themes and patterns in newspapers regarding stories of the two swimmers. Coding into themes.</p>	<p>one dimensional (reporting them solely in their athletic identity) creates implications for the athlete’s psychological well-being. The identities of both individuals were repeatedly constructed in terms of an athletic identity.</p>	<p>Through the exploration of news media for two swimmers (Hackett and Thorpe) limited identities were available to the two swimmers. Contrast between cultural understanding of elite athlete transition left the two swimmers stigmatized by their actions and lived experiences. Most commonly the two athletes were referred to as “fallen champions” when mistakes were made as well as “Disgraced athletes” Alcohol abuse, Depression,</p>

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		functioned to accomplish were also examined			
Author Title Source	Purpose	Methods & Procedures	Analysis	Findings	Discussion/ Recommendations Research Notes – Commonalities/Differences
<p>Menke, D, J., Germany, M, L.</p> <p>Reconstructing Athletic Identity: College Athletes and Sports Retirement</p> <p>Menke, D., & Germany, M. (2019). Reconstructing athletic identity: college athletes and sport retirement. <i>Journal of Loss and Trauma: Transition Planning in Sport Careers</i>, 24(1), 17–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2018.1522475</p>	<p>To provide data that will add to the understanding of the transition that occurs during sports retirement</p>	<p>One on one interviews with former college football and basketball players. Open ended interviews allowing athletes to reflect on their lived experiences. The interviews were conducted face-to-face. Each interview was transcribed verbatim. Coding was then used to</p>	<p>Finding themes in personal narratives from interviews and coding them into smaller segments to find sub-themes.</p>	<p>Three major themes evolved from the study:</p> <p>Coping with Transition, Gains or Strengths, and Loss of Identity.</p> <p>Many responded to the transition out of sports with difficulty coping with the life change, accompanie</p>	<p>Responses in this article were mostly the negative affect of sports retirement.</p> <p>Most participants because of being elite and playing div. I sport in championship venues they truly feel a loss of life when retiring from sport.</p> <p>Struggling to find structure in their lives.</p> <p>Lots of information on transition and athletes lived experiences.</p>

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		<p>find common themes In the athletes retirement transition.</p> <p>All athletes selected came from the Div. I level. 15 interviews were completed for the study</p>		<p>d by several instances of feelings of “loss for life as it once was”, and shattered dreams.</p> <p>Some positives as well; benefits of athletic experience-work ethic and leadership skills.</p>	
Author Title Source	Purpose	Methods & Procedures	Analysis	Findings	Discussion/ Recommendations Research Notes – Commonalities/Differences
<p>Babic, V., Bjelic, G., Bosnar, K.,</p> <p>Life Well-Being and Reasons for the Termination of Sport Careers among Croatian Elite Athletes</p> <p>Vesna Babic, Gordana Bjelic, & Ksenija Bosnar. (2019). Life well-being and reasons for the termination of sport careers among croatian</p>	<p>Establish a relationship between life well-being and reasons for the ending of sports careers.</p>	<p>170 Croatian male and female athletes who terminated their sports careers. 74 male 96 female.</p>	<p>Algorithm used QCCR written in the MATRIX language of SPSS.</p>	<p>Highest correlation was with a positive scale of life quality was ending a career due to finding new work</p>	<p>Age is unavoidable, most athletes know they cant compete forever but those who can’t except age/not prepared have less well-being, which is tied to a high sports identity.</p>

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<p>elite athletes. <i>Sport Mont</i>, 17(3), 21–25. https://doi.org/10.26773/smj.191008</p>		<p>15 questions:</p> <p>Three scales to measure life well-being were used: Scale of Quality of Life, Scale of Life well-being, and extended satisfaction with life scale.</p> <p>The eight most common reasons for retirement were offered: answered were given in binary (yes/no) format.</p>		<p>or education.</p> <p>Highest correlation for a negative correlation is leaving due to bad relationships with individuals from sport, Injuries, and the deselection process, and age.</p> <p>The canonical correlation analysis shows positive relation to retirement of sports careers due to different reason but not age.</p>	<p>The quasi results showed that well-being stems from deliberate or involuntary retirement from sports. Demonstrating a bad coach or GM, injury, and deselection as involuntary retirement options. While education or a new job is voluntary; leading to better quality of life.</p>
<p>Author Title Source</p>	<p>Purpose</p>	<p>Methods & Procedures</p>	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Findings</p>	<p>Discussion/ Recommendations Research Notes –</p>

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					Commonalities/Differences
<p>Jewett, R., Kerr, G., Tammine, K. University Sport Retirement and Athlete Mental Health: A Narrative Analysis</p> <p>Jewett, R., Kerr, G., & Tamminen, K. (2019). University sport retirement and athlete mental health: a narrative analysis. <i>Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health</i>, 11(3), 416–433. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2018.1506497</p>	<p>Explore the “sport context” in an athlete’s experience with mental health challenges during the retirement transition.</p>	<p>Narrative inquiry of Bryn: a former university athlete.</p> <p>Bryn told stories of her lived experiences.</p> <p>Selected as a retired elite athlete that experienced mood related mental challenges upon retirement from sport but is now recovered.</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <p>Life story interviews were conducted at Bryn’s apartment for</p>	<p>Dialogical Narrative Analysis (DNA) to consider details of Bryn’s story.</p>	<p>Bryn’s Self Perception as an athlete = (success, enjoyment, positivity, Strong IDENTITY)</p> <p>Bryn Developed a mental disorder from during the retirement and transition out of sport.</p> <p>Through praise she developed the dimension of “Glorified self” becoming celebrity</p>	<p>Athletes who are at the top of their game can take on strong athletic identities. In this case Bryn took on the form of glorified self, which then makes life after sport feel less rewarding.</p> <p>For athletes who are in the limelight it is hard for them to go back to the average joe lifestyle.</p> <p>Also, Elite athletes like Bryn are rewarded at their institutions with things like sports psychologist and athletic trainers who can help them cope with issues on and off the field. When the athlete retires, they no longer have these resources at their fingertips making transition more difficult.</p>

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		60-105 minutes.		<p>Bryn derived comfort from the control and structure given to her by her sport context, and the resources available to her made life easier (sports psych, coaching staff)</p> <p>^with these things stripped away Bryn struggled coping and identifying herself.</p> <p>Monologica I entangled narrative “If I was still in sports, I would have</p>	
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				<p>handled this better”</p> <p>Wreckage Narrative-when the individuals experience no longer fits the storyline of the dominative narrative type.</p>	
<p>Author Title Source</p>	<p>Purpose</p>	<p>Methods & Procedures</p>	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Findings</p>	<p>Discussion/ Recommendations Research Notes – Commonalities/Differences</p>
<p>Demetriou, A., Jago, A., Gill, P. R., Mesagno, C., Lutfiye, A.</p> <p>Forced Retirement Transition: A Narrative Case Study of an Elite Rules Football Player</p> <p>Demetriou, A., Jago, A., Gill, P., Mesagno, C., & Ali, L. (2020). Forced retirement transition: a narrative case study of an elite Australian Rules football player. <i>International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology</i>, 18(3), 321–335.</p>	<p>To generate knowledge on how to improve the retirement process of elite athletes</p>	<p>Narrative Case Study Approach</p> <p>One middle aged-former pro footballer</p> <p>Three Data collections: Three semi-structured 90 minute</p>	<p>A word narrative was constructed from the interviews. The narrative was then proofed by the subject for validity.</p> <p>Themes were derived from original narrative and then narrative was trimmed of non-relevant information.</p>	<p>Results from the life satisfaction scale showed that the subject had poor life satisfaction levels. Which was congruent</p>	<p>Masculine restrictive communication: masculine norms around being tough and hard.</p> <p>Clubs and Organizations looking at players as a commodity, while players look at the club as loyalist until the day they’re thrown away.</p>

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<p>https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2018.1519839</p>		<p>interviews conducted less than 5-years post retirement.</p> <p>1 month between each set of interviews.</p>	<p>Prior to first interview the subjects life satisfaction was also measured by the life satisfaction scale, measured on a 7-point Likert scale</p>	<p>with his interviews.</p> <p>Forced retirement was a major reason for Johns negative transition out of sport.</p> <p>Still has feeling of resentment towards how it ended and the staff.</p> <p>Neglected family and abused alcohol</p>	<p>Retirement from sport can be loss of community.</p>
<p>Author Title Source</p>	<p>Purpose</p>	<p>Methods & Procedures</p>	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Findings</p>	<p>Discussion/ Recommendations Research Notes –</p>

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					Commonalities/Differences
<p>Knights, S., Sherry, M., Ruddock-Hudson, M., O'Halloran, P.,</p> <p>The End of a Professional Sport Career: Ensuring a Positive Transition</p> <p>Knights, S., Sherry, E., Ruddock-Hudson, M., & O'Halloran, P. (2019). The end of a professional sport career: ensuring a positive transition. <i>Journal of Sport Management</i>, 33(6), 518–529. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2019-0023</p>	<p>Explore the experience of transition and life after sport in a group of retired professional athletes</p>	<p>45 retired athletes from three professional soccer leagues were interviewed.</p> <p>Three parts: Participants were asked to have discussions regarding transition, retirement, and their experiences flourishing in retirement.</p> <p>Interviews lasted 30-90 minutes</p>	<p>Researchers transcribed the interviews and analyzed them via NVivo10.</p> <p>Inductive and Deductive analysis were used in analysis process.</p> <p>Thematic Coding</p>	<p>Sports retirement was moved into four themes from the research:</p> <p>Support offered by the organization or club.</p> <p>Athletes Planning</p> <p>Preparation for retirement</p> <p>Positive influences on transition</p> <p>These four were then categorized under two themes: preparing for</p>	<p>Although athletes were not satisfied with their organizations support, those who had strong social support systems had positive transitions.</p> <p>feeling of being used/commodity.</p> <p>Alumni groups need to be more active in reaching out to former recent retirees.</p> <p>Athletes in this study felt no one from their club cared about them following retirement.</p>

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